

NSC BRIEFING

22 March 1955

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STRIKES IN ICELAND TIE UP NATION'S ECONOMY

- I. Strikes by 12 unions representing over 7,000 of Iceland's 26,000 organized workers began at midnight 17 March. Work stoppage in economic hub, Reykjavik (pop. 60,000), having effect of general strike on nation of 150,000. Reykjavik docks, which handle 90 percent of imports, completely tied up.
 - A. Workers demanding 25-30 percent wage rise plus benefits. No settlement in sight. Strikes may last from 2 to 5 weeks.
- II. No serious effect on operations of US-manned Keflavik base expected, but some sympathy walkouts likely. Carpenters failed to report for work at base on 18 March.
 - A. No immediate shortages at base, but airlift of essential supplies has been requested.
- III. Strikes are success for local Communists. They, with left-wing Social Democrats, dominate Icelandic Federation of Labor, and have led current wage campaign. Communists seeking to control entire labor movement and to use it for political ends.

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